

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS, WITH AMBASSADOR MARI-LUCI JARAMILLO OF ARGENTINA, EN ROUTE TO
WASHINGTON, D.C., FROM BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
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AMBASSADOR JARAMILLO: I want to take just a few minutes to tell you my own kind of personal reaction to the trip. As you know, I've been working Latin American issues now for about 30 years and I've worked similar kinds of things that we did on this particular trip. To be such a short time, I'm really pleased with the accomplishments. Not only were we able to thank them for the things that they've been doing, but we created an ambiance where ^{we} will be able to continue a very good dialogue and up front as friends in whatever we need to talk about.

I've tried to rethink what were the highlights for me in these two days and I think the most important thing from my perspective is that we got a commitment to help us in Haiti in February. I thought that that was very important because when we put it in the context of the Latin American concern with sovereignty, this is very very special to want to help us this way so I was very pleased with that.

I thought another thing that just came out like in the process was the suggestion of the Secretary to start a bilateral working group. That became very important to many many of the Argentineans. I don't know how many of them at the highest levels were very very pleased with that opportunity where people will be sharing as equals in the discussion in security. That one was very very good. As the Secretary progressed from meeting to meeting to meeting, he kept adding pieces to how he visualized a working group like this, and they all kept nodding and agreeing and excited about it.

After the meeting, many of us would talk to as many people as we could to see what their reaction had been. It was always very positive. So as a consequence we now have a very good idea of what this working group would look like. They've agreed to dates. They've agreed to the membership, how many people should be on it, when they're going to meet, where they're going to meet, about the need for tight agendas -- just so many things were agreed. I'm used to going to some meetings where a lot of this discussion takes place and then another group comes in and attaches details. This one, many of the details just evolved in the process.

Another thing that I thought was so important was going to the Congress and working with civilians and being able to talk about the same things that they had talked with the military. Talking to the Congress, I think that that's very important. Again, I think that it's such an upfront way of dealing with friends, which to me that I'm trying to see is this friendship really sincere and level. I just felt really good about what was happening there. With Congress people saying they want to participate in this bilateral

group was very exciting for me because there's an opportunity of civilians and military working together which is one of our big aims is to get them to work together to strengthen institutions of democracy.

All of this just kind of flowed -- really important message to those of us working in security, lots of important things were happening. There were many other kinds of discussions that were going on that were kind of side issues. We're talking about side issues such as inviting the minister of defense to a meeting; discussion with the president that set the tone where he committed to helping out in whichever way was possible in peacekeeping.

Let me think of other issues that were very important. There were discussions on things that they are doing with their army, for example, as they think through a total volunteer army. There were opportunities to discuss that we've gone through that process. The Secretary offering that we would help them -- offer to them our experiences so that they don't have to make some of the mistakes we made so that they will understand the process. I thought those kinds of things, civilian oversight, how we work that into our process. So many of these little things are kind of side issues and yet they're very important to some of the security. I think probably I would like to stop there.

One issue is that many many of the things that the Secretary worked on over the past two days were tied to peacekeeping. That peacekeeping is one of the roles of the new military and so learning to work together, all of us in the hemisphere, for when we're called for peacekeeping will be very important. There were some developments from there, for example, a request for helping them with English language learning so that all of them will be able when they get together for peacekeeping and humanitarian kinds of experiences that they will have a common language. So those are the kinds of things that were being developed.

SECRETARY PERRY: Have you finished your trip report? So I'm available for Q & A, if you'd like.

Q. What about this specific shopping list that he mentioned of weapons? What kind of things -- he mentioned helicopters, upgraded vehicles -- what else are they looking for?

SECRETARY PERRY: He has quite a long list of equipment they would like to have that includes M113's, new ones. One they don't now have as well as some support in modifying M113's they already have. It includes some helicopters. They have a big interest in getting a couple of ships, frigates. They're looking at more antitank weapons. It's a big list and they realize that we and they are going to have to go over that list together because they don't have much resources. We have to identify then the excess defense articles which we can provide at minimal cost to them. So the excess defense articles that fit that list and that don't require expensive modification because they have to pay for the modifications themselves.

Q. Do they have a dollar amount in mind of how much they'd like to spend on some of these?

SECRETARY PERRY: The operating budget for their entire navy is only \$100 million. So that gives you some sort of a flavor -- ships for example, we're looking at leasing them the ships because they can't afford to buy them, even used ships.

MR. HALL: I hate to disagree with you but I've been traveling with you for awhile and that's not that big a list compared to a lot of conversations that you've had. It was a fairly modest list because they are pretty realistic about it. There are a number of things on it, but they weren't big ticket items.

SECRETARY PERRY: Bob is right. I said "big" relative to the resources if they were going out to buy them new. They cannot afford to buy them new. It has to be excess defense articles. It has to be excess defense articles that don't require expensive mod. That's the point.

Q. F-16's. What about the (inaudible) there? I know that that's something that titillates people, you don't like to push that forward. Having said that, would you rather see the Brazilians or the Argentines or the Chileans have F16's or MIG29's.

SECRETARY PERRY: If that becomes a real question, I'll face it. Right now they're not planning to get either one of them. Probably the main reason is that given their needs and given the resources, it's not a very good investment of resources. I would be prepared to discuss that with them if they saw that as an important need. But literally, they did not. They never raised the question to me. I had been told that they might raise the question, but they did not.

Q. What are the plusses and minuses in dealing with Latin America now, in general.

SECRETARY PERRY: I think there are some big plusses right now. I wasn't here when Mari-Luci was talking to you, but we've turned a big corner, I think, in Latin America, but more specifically, in Argentina and Brazil. You only have to go back five years from now to look at the relationship we had with Argentina. It's night and day difference right now. Very strong cooperation. Very good working relationship. In Brazil, we have the potential, I think, of creating that sort of a strong working relationship as well. I'm optimistic that we can develop that strong working relationship with both of those countries.

On that strong foundation, I think there's a possibility of building up an important regional security program with Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay -- with the United States working jointly with all of those countries for common security interests. That would be really unprecedented. I want to be careful not to overstate, but I really think the potential for moving in new and very positive directions in regional security in South America is in front of us now. This visit more than anything else confirmed that judgment

in my mind. That's what Mari-Luci had been telling me before we went down there, but I saw that first hand and I would say even more strongly than I had anticipated.

Q. You made a point before that you thought there was a difference between NATO and Latin America in terms of forming any kind of an alliance or membership group or whatever because NATO is committed to defend one another.

SECRETARY PERRY: NATO is designed to defend against an attack. There's no threat that any of us can see to Argentina being attacked by any other country. Therefore, that kind of a security alliance doesn't seem to be needed there today. What's needed is a security alliance which does two things: first of all, which allows the countries to cooperate on security issues, for example, joint peacekeeping operations and joint training; and secondly, provides implicitly the confidence building measures of working with each other to help minimize the chance of future security problems developing between countries in the area. NATO has had that function right along, helping keep the countries within NATO working together and friendly with each other.

Q. Do you see a follow-up meeting of the same hemispheric defense ministers after the summit?

SECRETARY PERRY: I anticipate a meeting of some hemispheric defense ministers. As I sit here, I'm not sure whether I want to propose all of the defense ministers coming, or whether I make it a more selective group, say the countries that I just mentioned, where I can see a big potential payoff in getting a very vital relationship going rather quickly.

Q. Bosnia. I realize it's a touchy subject, and this whole business about the raid, but you were quite enthused at the meeting in Spain about the idea of perhaps multiple targets, etc., etc., hitting them hard, teaching them a lesson. Isn't this kind of a slap on the wrist when you -- you know, I mean they don't worry about collateral damage. They go after civilians and try to kill them with these bombing raids. It doesn't seem like this is very tit for tat.

SECRETARY PERRY: Let me say, I was in Seville pounding on the table for really tough, robust reactions. Let me say that I think the air strike was an appropriate strike today. I'll tell you why I think that and you can disagree, but first of all, it included all four of the nations that I wanted to be in that air strike. There's been a lot of forces tearing at the fabric of the coalition we had over there. It was very good to have all four of these nations teaming up to go in and perform this operation. That was a very clear statement that we are together on these air strikes. Secondly, I was pleased that we went over there with 39 aircraft and not two or four. Third, I was pleased that it was a successful operation in that we achieved the main strike objectives and we did it without losing any airplanes. This was not a zero-risk operation. They had fairly substantial air defenses around that airfield. And finally, I think the judgment to avoid extensive damage, in particular, avoid collateral damage, on a first strike was appropriate.

What we're trying to do is not blow up a lot of things in Croatia, but to deter the Krajina Serbs from doing anything like that again. I think there's a good probability we'll be successful, and if we are, that's the test of the mission. That's the test of success. If we were not. That is, if they go in tomorrow or the next day with another bombing attack, then I'm with you. Then we'll go back and blow up their airplanes. Do that with additional risk to the NATO airplanes and with additional risk of collateral damage. But there's no reason to take that risk, if we can achieve the deterrence without that.

Q. I was a little confused. We got some word today that those planes weren't in sight or anything. Were ~~they~~^{there} planes in sight? Could you have hit the planes?

SECRETARY PERRY: We could have attacked the airplanes and we certainly could have destroyed some of them. My point was though, let me get back to what I said before. We would do that at increased risk to the NATO airplanes and increased collateral damage. My judgment is I would not have taken that risk on the first strike. I would be prepared to take that risk if the first strike did not succeed in doing the deterrence. Again, what we're trying to do is deter them from sending those airplanes up again. If this strike succeeds in doing that, then it was successful whether it blows up airplanes or doesn't blow up airplanes. If it didn't, then it was not successful and we have to go back again; if we go back again, we're going after the airplanes.

Q. Have you any further words about or for Senator Helms?

SECRETARY PERRY: I thought I was fairly explicit about it. I'm like Shali [General Shalikashvili], I'm not trying to pick a fight with anybody. I am concerned about a very important issue which is the constitutional role of the commander-in-chief over the military forces. I think it's important to support that every way we can, and I do not think it's appropriate to tear apart the fabric of that very important relationship.

Q. A quick question on JPATS, if you don't mind. You've said that the decision will be out on the award of the JPATS contract sometime early next year. Does that mean there will be a decision regarding programs in the Deutch memo as well at that time?

SECRETARY PERRY: A decision on the Deutch memo will be before that. That's part of our fiscal '96 budget and so we have to have all of those decisions before we put the budget to bed. The only reason we haven't announced those decisions is because we have to tie it in with all of the other budget decisions. We're down now to the last set of decisions on the budget and these are the big ones. These are the swinging ones. But they definitely have to be decided before the budget is put to bed. So that's coming up in weeks, not in months. What I meant to say about the JPATS -- I'm sorry if I gave the impression the decision was going to be made in the first quarter -- what I meant to say was it won't be made before the first quarter. The exact timing of the decision is something that the evaluating team will have to determine, depending on how that evaluation is going. I think the first or second quarter of next year is a good possibility, but certainly not before the first quarter.

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Q. On the Deutch memo, are you all going to make a couple of announcements and then a couple of announcements, and then a couple of announcements? Are you going to try to come up with one package on all of these weapons systems?

SECRETARY PERRY: I would prefer to announce the decisions on that package all at once. But, as I said, it's integrated into the whole budget decision, so we're trying to work all of those together right now. In any event, it's weeks away, not months away. It's intimately tied to the budget process.

Thank you, sir.

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